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SUBJECT: RESULTS OF BRAZILIAN OCTOBER 3 ELECTIONS

REF: BRASILIA 2484

1.(SBU) SUMMARY. The Workers' Party (PT) of Brazilian President Lula da Silva did well in nationwide municipal elections on October 3, winning city hall in several of the largest cities, including six state capitals. As expected, the Sao Paulo mayor's race will go to a second-round runoff, pitting the PT incumbent Marta Suplicy against the PSDB's Jose Serra. These were municipal elections for 5,563 mayors and city councils nationwide, so no party scored a national knockout, but the PT expanded its number of city halls, both in the big cities and in the interior. The centrist PMDB will continue to have the most mayors overall, followed by the PSDB. These elections were local, and so were not a true litmus test for the Lula administration, but with the economy and Lula's popularity improving in recent months, several PT candidates made late gains and either won outright in the first round or made it into the October 31 second round. Similarly, the results do not give clear guidance for the 2006 national elections, except to underscore that the PT and PSDB are the most vital parties at the national level, and are likely to face each other again in the 2006 presidential and Sao Paulo governor's races. END SUMMARY.

2.(SBU) THE SOUTHEAST

In Sao Paulo, Jose Serra (PSDB) at 44% and incumbent Marta Suplicy (PT) at 36% will go to a second-round runoff on October 31. Polls have shown Serra defeating Marta in second-round projections and he is likely to prevail, but his margin of victory has been shrinking in recent weeks. Both the PT and PSDB can be expected to mobilize their national stars on their candidates' behalf during October.

In Belo Horizonte, capital of Minas Gerais, incumbent Fernando Pimentel (PT) won a crushing first-round victory over challenger Joao Leite (PSB) by 68-22%. Leite had the endorsement of Minas's popular PSDB governor, Aecio Neves.

In Rio de Janeiro, incumbent Cesar Maia (PFL) won a first-round victory with 50.1%; defeating evangelical Senator Marcelo Crivella (PL) at 21%. The PT is weak in Rio and its candidate won just 6%.

In Vitoria, capital of Espirito Santo, Joao Coser (PT) at 37% and Cesar Colnagi (PSDB, endorsed by the outgoing PSDB mayor) at 34% will go to the second round. Coser was an early long-shot, but made a strong finish to end up in first place. Colnagi will likely get second-round votes from supporters of PP's conservative third-place finisher.

13. (SBU) THE FAR SOUTH

Porto Alegre, in Rio Grande do Sul, is perhaps the PT's most cherished stronghold. Raul Pont (PT) at 37% will face Jose Fogaca (PPS) who won 28%, in a second-round runoff. Pont is trying to win the PT's fifth straight mayoral election in Porto Alegre.

In Florianopolis, capital of Santa Catarina, Dario Berger (PSDB) at 35% should beat conservative Chico Assis (PP) who won 27%, in the second round, as the third- and forth-place finishers were from farther to the left.

As expected Curitiba, in Parana, will see Beto Richa (PSDB) at 35%, face Angel Vanhoni (PT) who won 31%, in the second-round. Vanhoni did well to get so close and has put the run-off outcome in doubt.

14. (SBU) THE NORTHEAST

Salvador, capital of Bahia, is headquarters to the Antonio Carlos Magalhaes ("ACM") PFL machine. But ACM's candidate, Cesar Borges at 22%, badly trailed Joao Henrique (PDT) at 43%. Henrique is favored in the second-round because he will unite the PT (whose candidate won 22%) with other anti-ACM forces. Pundits are already wondering if ACM's machine is beginning to crumble in its own home base.

In Recife, in Pernambuco, incumbent Joao Paulo (PT) separated himself from a close race with Carlos Cadoca of the state's PMDB/PFL machine, handily winning a first-round reelection victory by 56-28%.

Either the polling in Fortaleza, capital of Ceara, was

woefully poor, or many voters changed their minds in the final hours. Moroni Torgan (PFL) at 26% and Luizianne Lins (PT maverick) at 22%, will go to a second-round runoff. Torgan and Lins were numbers two and four, respectively, in last week's polls. Early front-runner Antonio Cambráia (of the state's PSDB machine), and communist Inácio Arruda (PCdoB) who was supported by the national PT party, finished third and fourth.

São Luís, in Maranhão, is headquarters to the Sarney family PFL/PMDB machine, but the family split this year, allowing Tadeu Palácio (PDT) to win a first-round victory.

In Maceió, capital of Alagoas, Cicero Almeida (PDT) won with 43% of the vote. Almeida pulled ahead of early favorite Alberto Sexta-Feira of the state's PSB machine, who got 27%. (With a population less than 200,000, Maceió will not have a second round.)

Aracaju, in Sergipe, delivered the champion vote-getter this year. PT incumbent Marcelo Deda crushed his PPS challenger by 71-18%. Though from a small state, Deda should now have a national profile in the PT party.

In João Pessoa, capital of Paraíba, Ricardo Coutinho (PSB) scored an impressive victory with 64% against Ruy Carneiro (PSDB) who won 30%. The outgoing PMDB mayor endorsed Coutinho.

Natal, in Rio Grande do Norte, will see a second-round runoff between incumbent Carlos Eduardo Alves (PSB) who looked to do better than his tally of 37%, versus challenger Luiz Almir (PSDB) who won 30%.

Teresina, capital of impoverished Piauí, gave physician Silvio Mendes (PSDB) 48%. Mendes, supported by the outgoing PSDB mayor, is favored in the second round against Adalgisa Moraes Souza (PMDB) who won 25%. Souza is the wife of PT-baiting Senator Mao Santa (PMDB).

15. (SBU) THE CENTER-WEST AND THE NORTH

In Goiânia, capital of Goiás (the state that surrounds Brasília), PMDB dinosaur Iris Rezende (PMDB) won 47% and is favored in the second round against PT incumbent Pedro Wilson, who won 23% after his candidacy was nearly canceled by an electoral judge for campaign violations.

In Cuiabá, Mato Grosso state, long-shot PT candidate Alexandre Cesar won a surprising 33% and will go to the second round against the PSDB's Wilson Santos who won 36%. These results are a big disappointment to the PPS, whose Sérgio Ricardo was backed by the outgoing PPS incumbent.

In Campo Grande, capital of Mato Grosso do Sul, as expected Nelsinho Trad (PMDB) won a first-round victory over Vander Loubet (PT), by 55-23%.

Porto Velho, in Rondônia, will see a second-round runoff between two left-of-center candidates: Roberto Sobrinho (PT) who won 32%, and Mauro Nazif (PSB) at 30%. Nazif will be favored to win on October 31.

In Rio Branco, Acre state, Raimundo Angelim (PT) came from behind for a gratifying 49-41% win over Marcio Bittar (PPS). (Rio Branco's population is under 200,000, so there is no second-round runoff.)

Manaus, capital of Amazonas, will see a second-run runoff between PFL dinosaur Amazonino Mendes, whose 43% beat out PSB longshot Serafim Correa, at 28%. The PT supported communist Vanessa Graziotin (PCdoB), who won 13%. Former-Governor Mendes was expected to sweep to an easy first-round victory, but now faces a difficult runoff.

Boa Vista, in Roraima, reelected incumbent Teresa Juca (PPS) with 56% of the vote.

Macapá, in Amapá, as expected, reelected incumbent João Henrique (PT) with 41%. (Macapá's population is under 200,000, so there will be no second-round.)

In Belém, capital of Pará, favorite Duciomar Costa (PTB) won 48% and will be forced to a second round by federal Senator Ana Julia Carepa (PT), who got 33%.

In Palmas, capital of Tocantins, longshot Raul Filho (PT) scored a huge upset in a small state by crushing the PSDB candidate of the Siqueira Campos machine, by 64-32%.

COMMENT - PT AND PSDB SEEN AS WINNERS

16. (SBU) The incumbent PT Mayor of São Paulo, Marta Suplicy, was considerably outpolled by PSDB standard-bearer, José Serra, and the eight-point margin suggests she is unlikely to beat him in the October 31 runoff. But President Lula's

PT did well elsewhere in the first round, winning six of 26 state capitals outright, with a chance to win eight more in the second round. Early results indicate the Workers' Party's success was not limited to the big cities. Of the 5,563 mayors nationwide, the PT won 381 mayoralties yesterday --a big jump from the 187 it won in 2000. For overall number of mayors, the PT still trails amorphous giant PMDB (1,014), as well as the opposition PSDB that won 828, the PFL with 767, and the center-right PTB with 403. Only the PT and PTB elected more mayors yesterday than they did in the 2000 cycle. Founded as an urban labor party, the PT defended its big-city incumbencies in Belo Horizonte and Recife, as well as winning the smaller capitals of Acre, Amapa, Sergipe and Tocantins. The PT's disappointments include likely incumbent losses in Belem and Goiania and the squelching of higher hopes in some other venues.

17. (SBU) Meanwhile, the PSDB had fewer pieces at play in these capitals, as its strength is not concentrated in there. The PSDB is surely gratified by Serra's showing in Sao Paulo and other strong showings in Sao Paulo state as well as in Piaui, Cuiaba, Curitiba and Espirito Santo. However, the candidate endorsed by one of its star governors, Aecio Neves in Minas Gerais, got crushed by a PT incumbent, and its machine candidate in northeastern Ceara inexplicably failed to make the second round.

COMMENT CONTINUED - OTHER PARTIES A MIXED BAG

18. (SBU) Cesar Maia's first round reelection in Rio de Janeiro is a great triumph for the PFL, but the party did poorly in other big cities (particularly in traditional redoubts Salvador and Curitiba). The small left-of-center PSB and PDT both did well, picking up two capitals each. The PMDB continued its pattern of resilience and decay, as it piled up hundreds of small town victories but, without any national stars, failed to win any big cities. The conservative PP had a tough time, with reverses ranging from Paulo Maluf's poor showing in Sao Paulo to losses in Florianopolis, Manaus, and Boa Vista. The PCdoB (Communist Party of Brazil) generally supported PT candidates, and the communists' only sitting mayor, Luciana Santos in Olinda (near Recife) was reelected with 55% of the vote. Two other credible PCdoB candidates --in Manaus and Fortaleza-- failed to reach the second round. But in Camaragibe, another Recife satellite town, Joao Lemos won and became the PCdoB's second mayor.

JUDGE RECOGNIZES GAY MARRIAGE

19. (SBU) Finally, one of the election's oddities was the Supreme Electoral Court indirectly recognizing gay marriage. Brazil has an election law designed to reduce the strength of family dynasties by prohibiting one family member from succeeding another in executive office. The Supreme Electoral Court ruled that in the town of Viseu, in Para state, State Deputy Eulina Rabelo had established a legally-recognized "stable wife-wife relationship" with incumbent Mayor Astrid Maria Cunha, and therefore could not run to succeed her.

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